

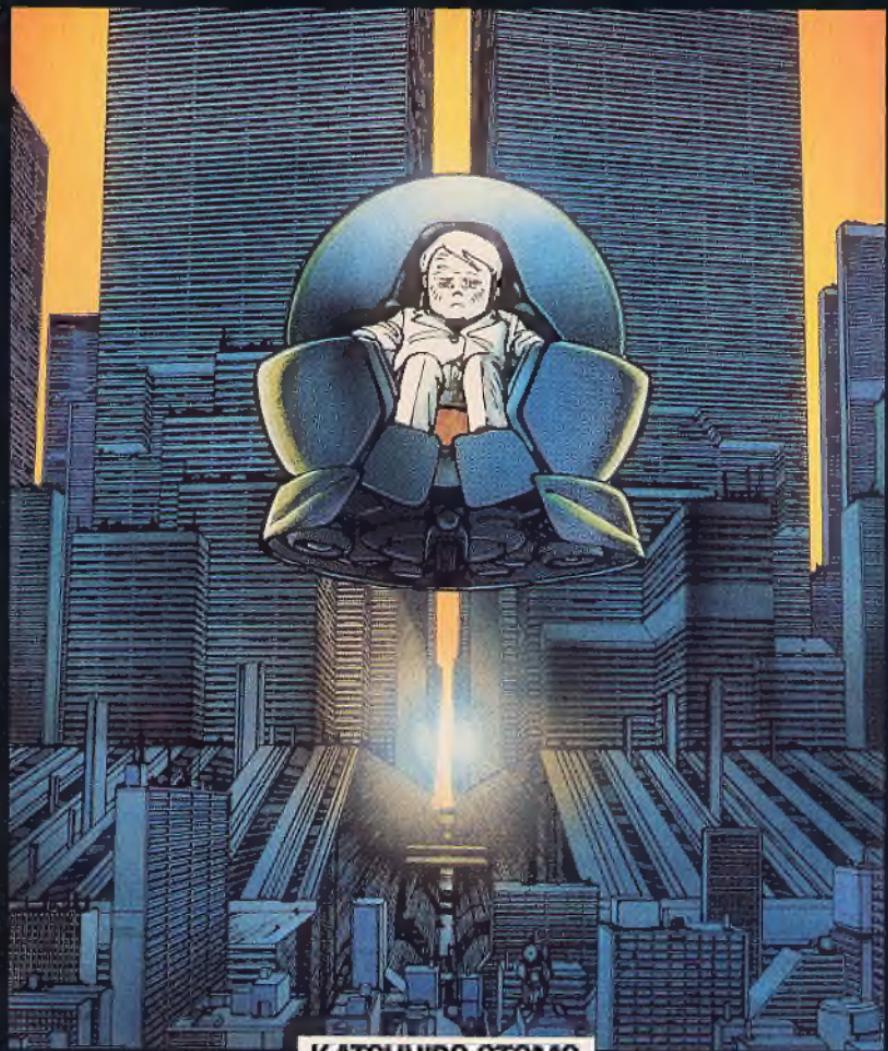
# AKIRA

2

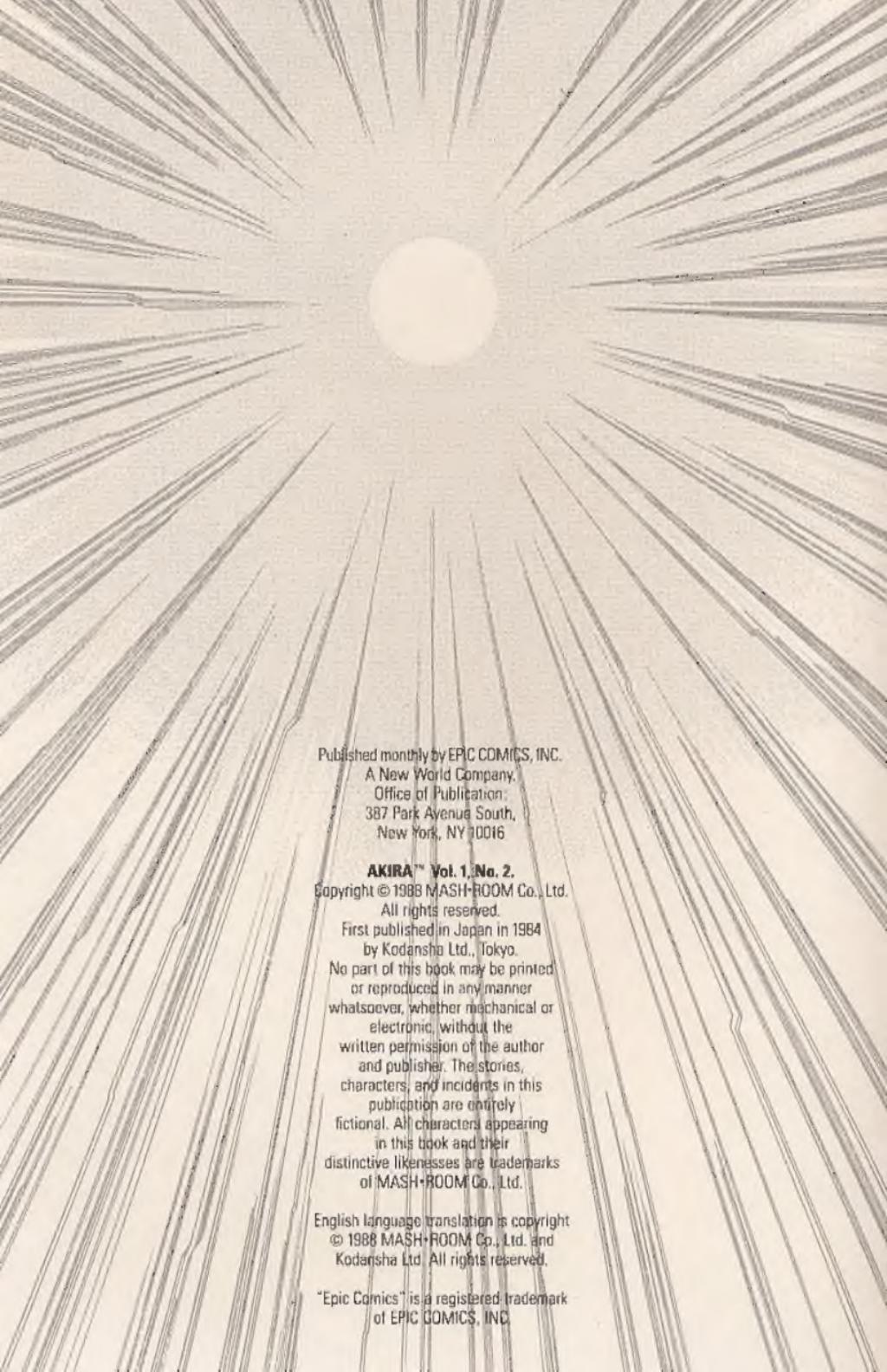
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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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# AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 2

## PURSUIT

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

**Kaneda** and his friends—teenaged delinquents from the local vocational school—have made an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the site and found far more than they expected. In an area said to be totally deserted, they encounter a strange, wizened-faced child, known only as **Number 26**. He is terrified of something and is possessed of extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in trouble with the authorities following the incident, and learn, to their surprise, that the "police" they encountered after the accident were not normal officers, but part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** brazenly attempts to pick up **Kay**, a strange girl who catches his fancy. **Kay**, however, is not interested. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance organization, dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

During the mayhem that ensues, both the delinquents and the resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**, and again he uses his powers, to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but first **Ryu** and then **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. Ryu attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**.

As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, armed and ready.



Kaneda



Number 26



Kay



Tetsuo



IT'S A  
DEADEND...

UHHHEE

YOU  
IN  
THERE!  
FREEZE!  
PUT  
YOUR  
HANDS  
UP!

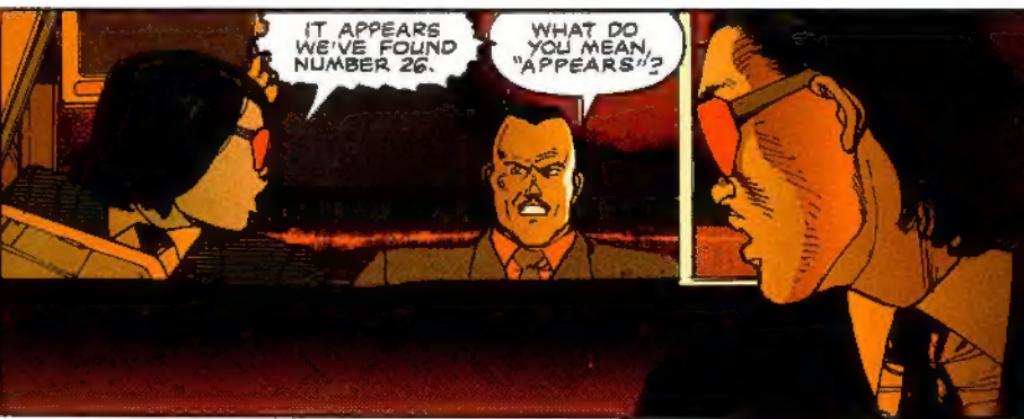
DON'T MAKE  
A MOVE.  
THROW DOWN  
YOUR GUN.



STOP!  
DON'T...

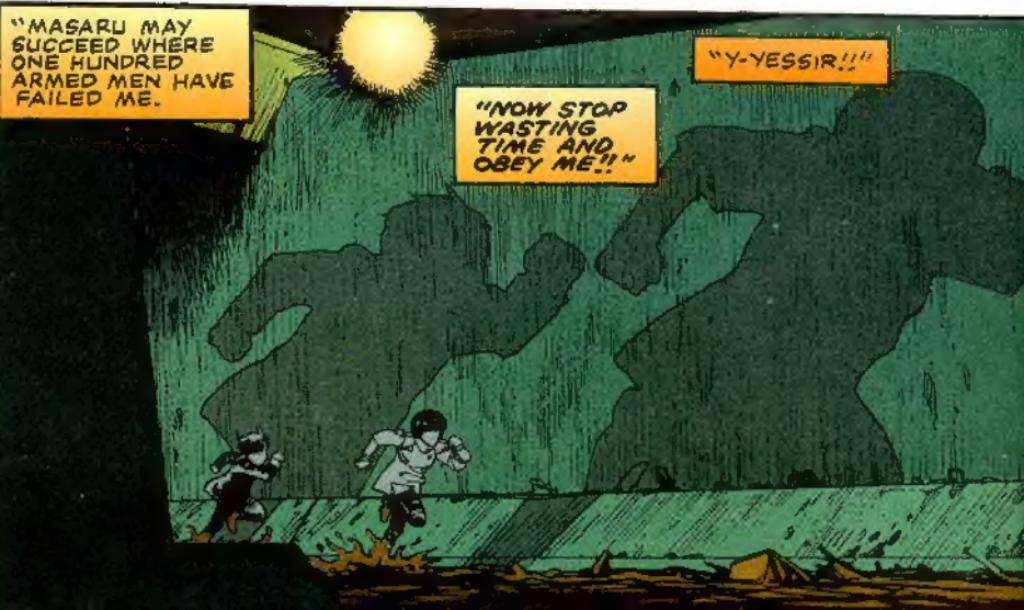








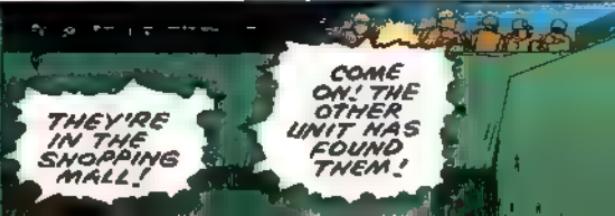
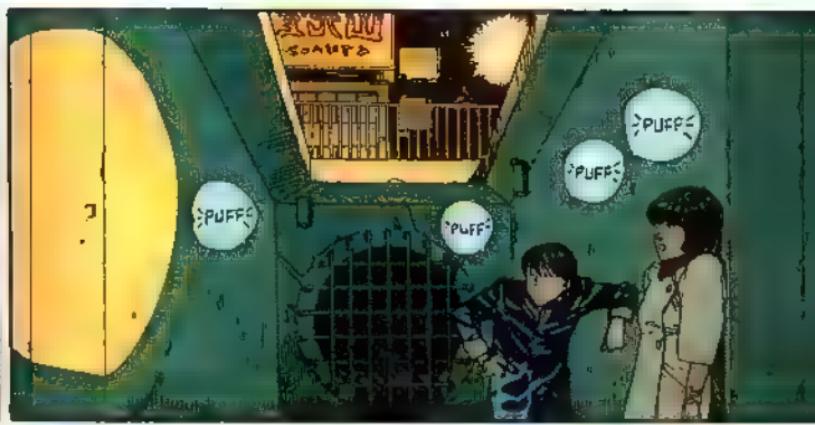
VERY WELL,  
CONTACT LABO.  
TELL HIM  
WE'LL BE  
NEEDING  
MASARU.



"MASARU MAY  
SUCCEED WHERE  
ONE HUNDRED  
ARMED MEN HAVE  
FAILED ME.

"NOW STOP  
WASTING  
TIME AND  
OBEY ME!!"

"Y-YESSIR!!"



BY  
THE  
WAY...

WHO THE  
HELL ARE  
YOU  
PEOPLE?

THAT'S WHAT I  
WANT TO  
KNOW!! JUST WHO  
ARE YOU,  
& AND WHAT'S  
YOUR CON-  
NECTION  
TO THE  
LITTLE  
GUY?

YOU  
MEAN  
THAT  
PINT-  
SIZED  
FREAK?

NOT THAT IT  
MATTERS. I  
CAN'T LET  
YOU GO NOW

COME  
WITH  
ME.  
MY  
PLEASURE!

SNAP

BLAM BLAM



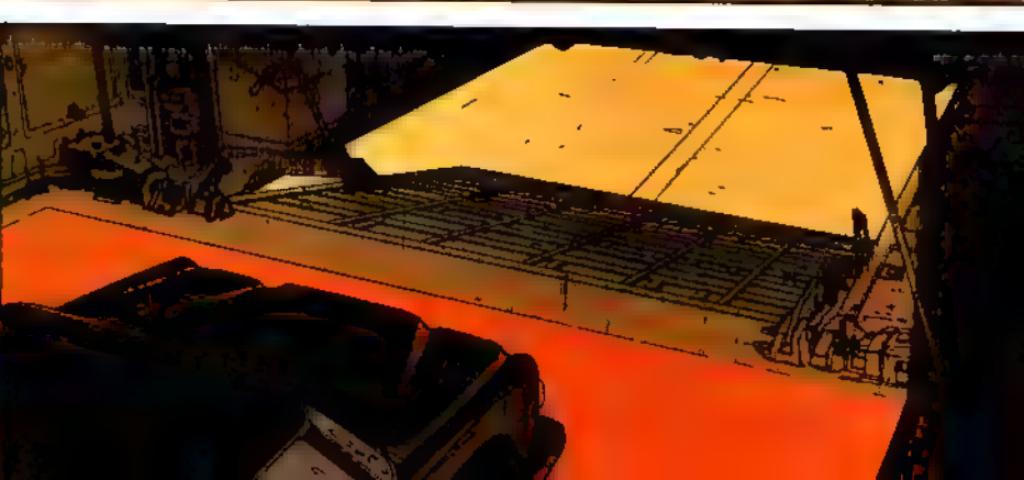


HALT

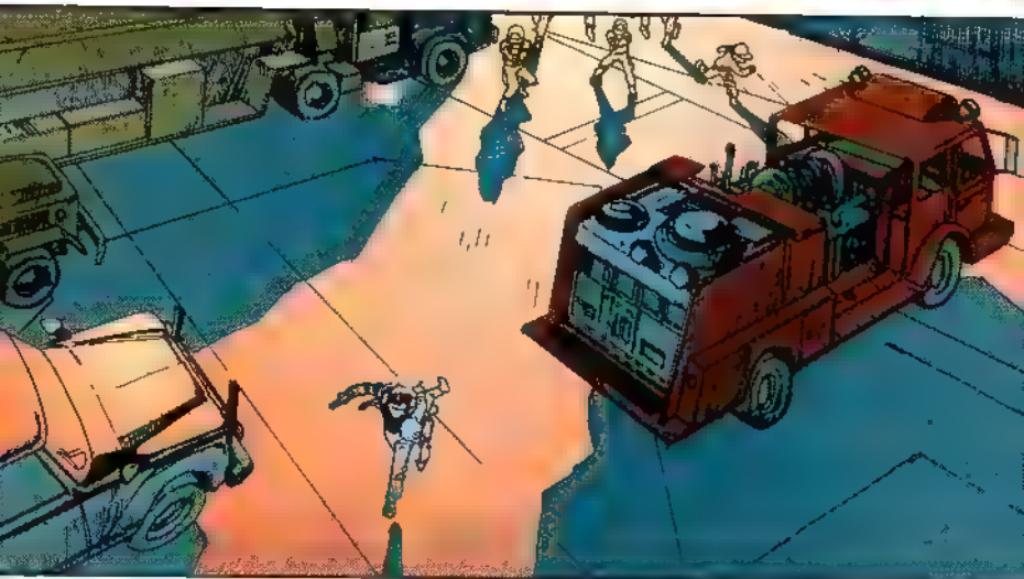
NO VEHICLES  
PERMITTED PAST  
THIS POINT

WARNING

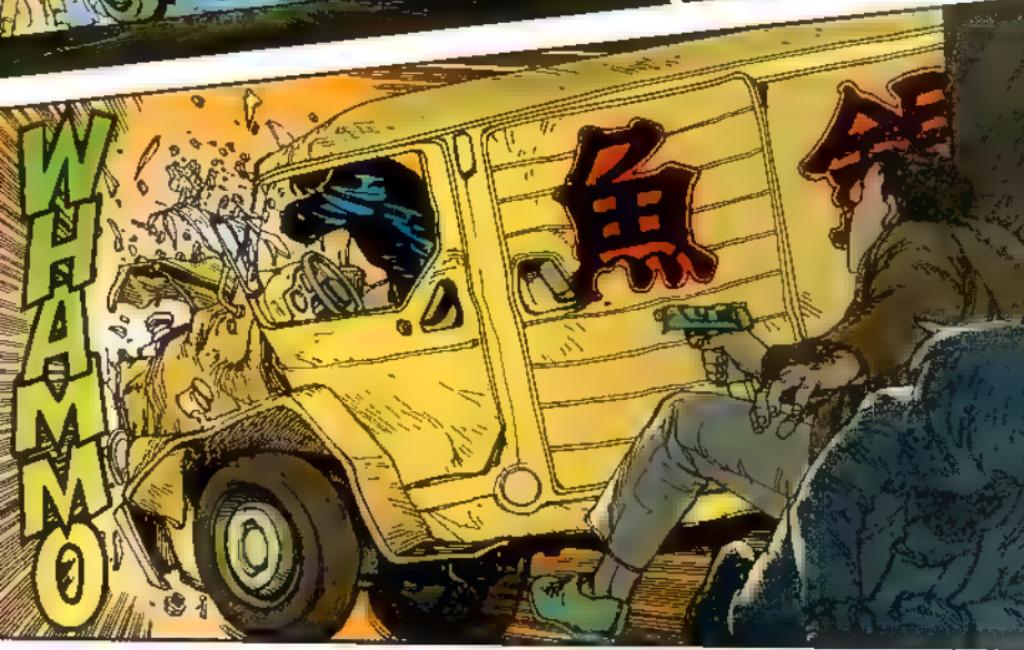
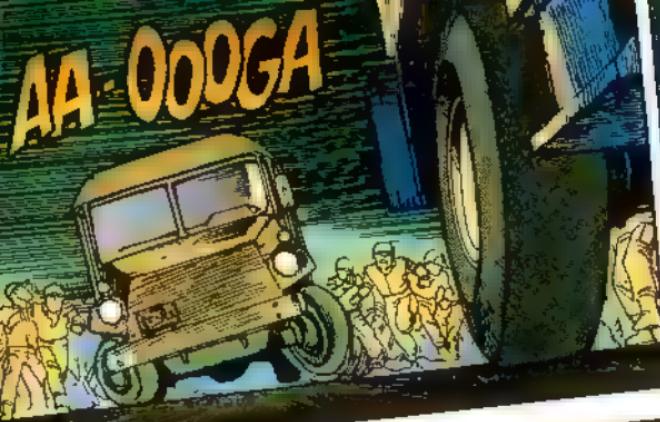
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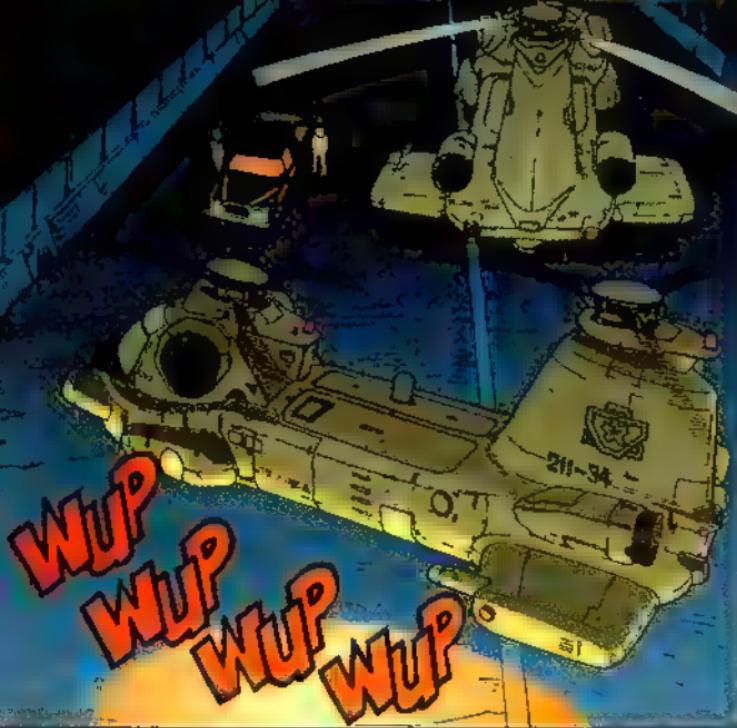


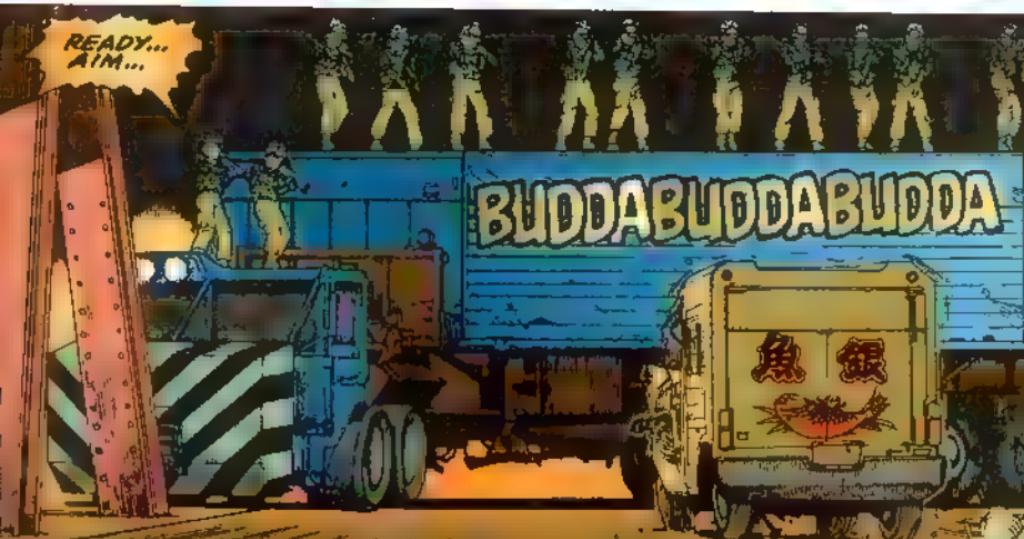










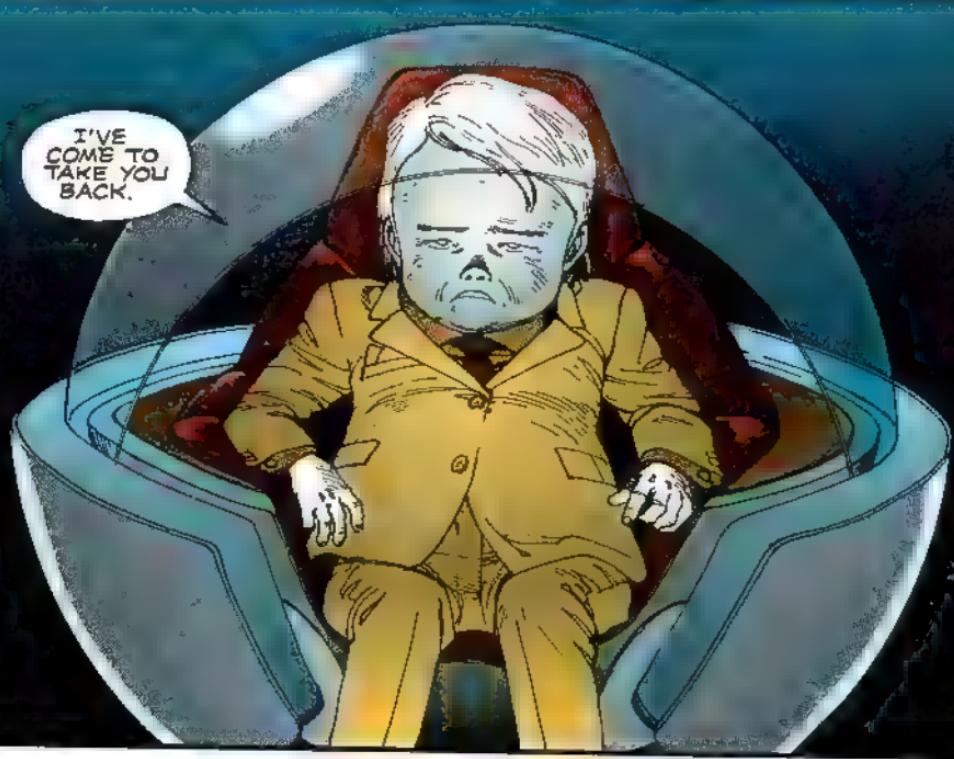




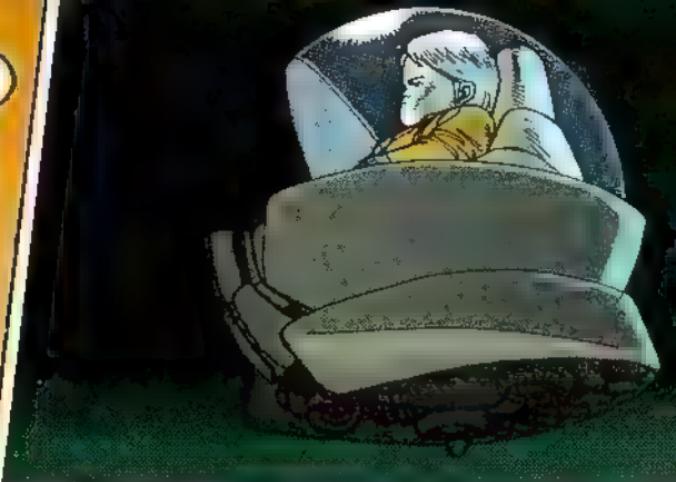






























YAAAAAH!



YAAAAAH!



# KROOM





IF YOU WANT  
IT, COME AN'  
GET IT!

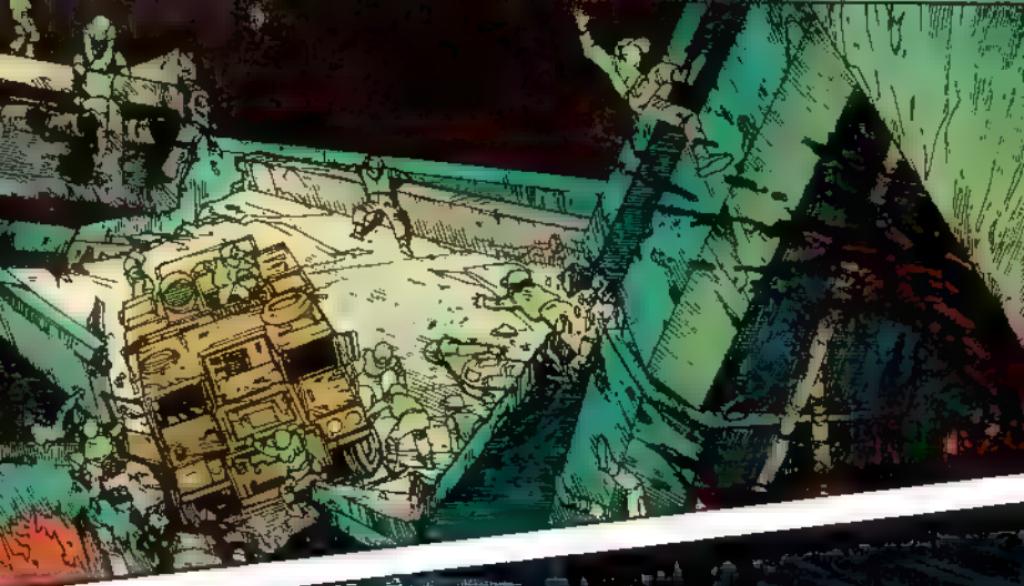


WHAM



KRAK

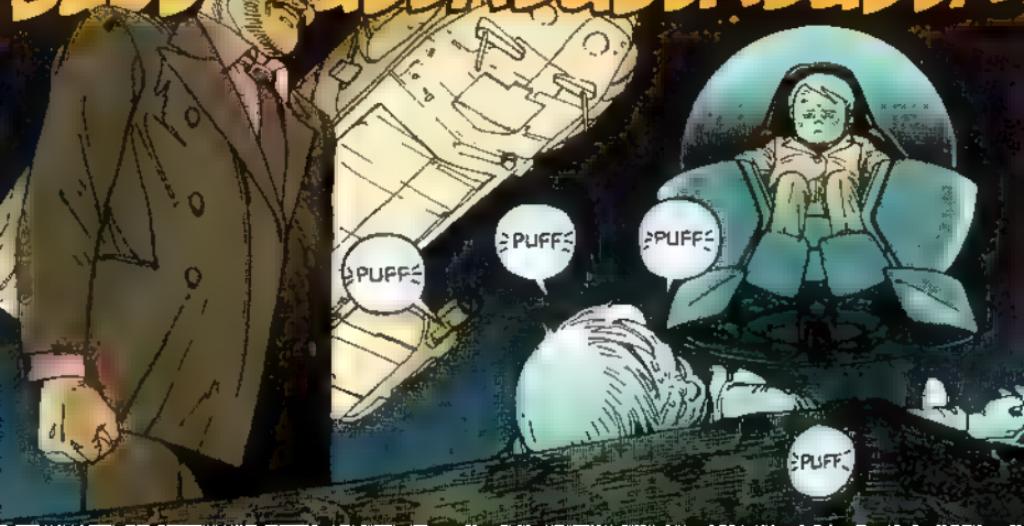


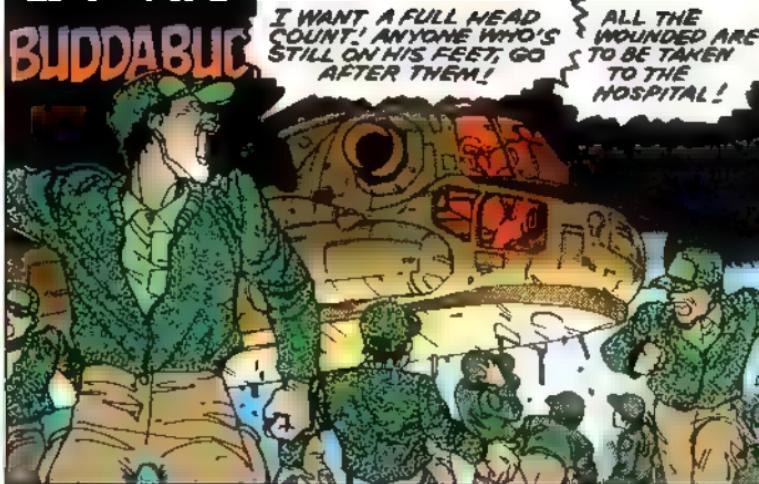






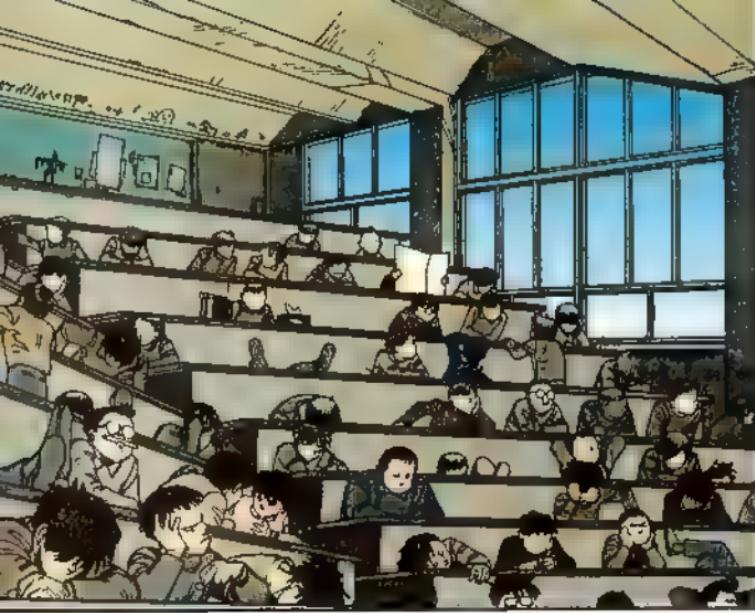
# BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA











NATIONAL NEWS

A WEEK  
AFTER  
EIGHTEENTH  
DISTRICT  
DISASTER,  
CANAL  
REPAIRS  
STILL  
DELAYED

Indeed, there are some

concerned

about

the

disaster

caused

by

the

work

and

power

in

growing

white.

The

headline,

strong

recent

should

be

put

the

appealing

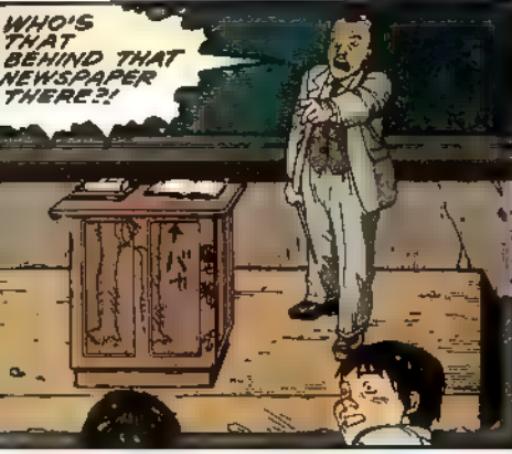
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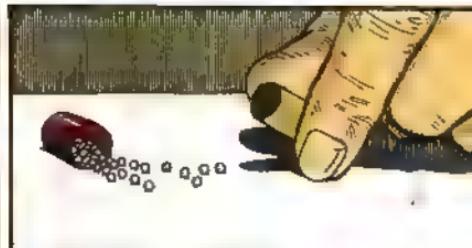
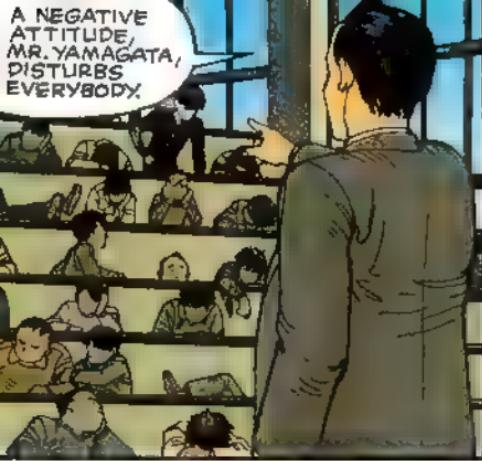
kind

of

indus-

content.

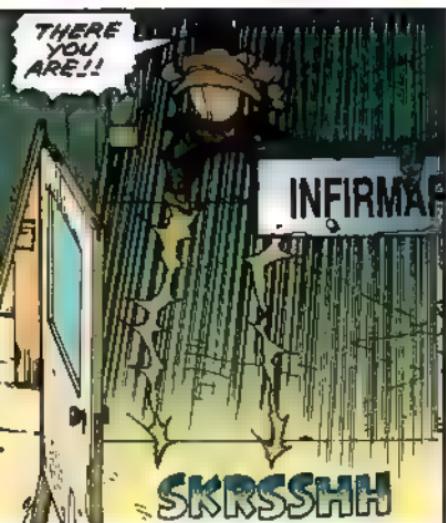


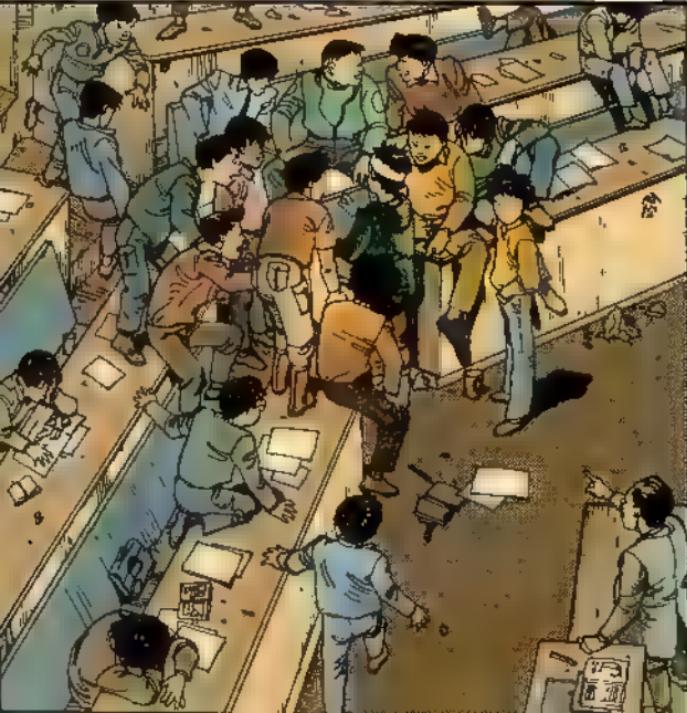
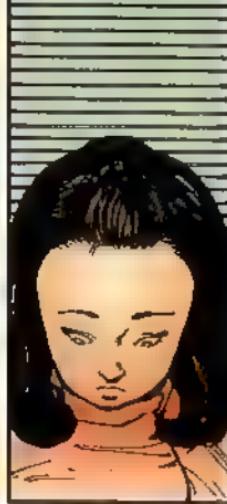


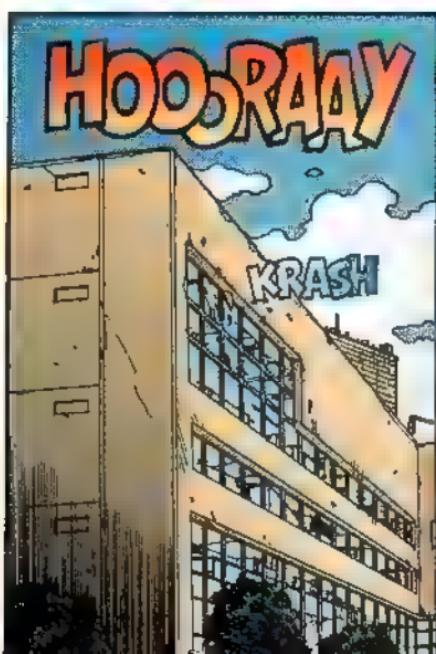
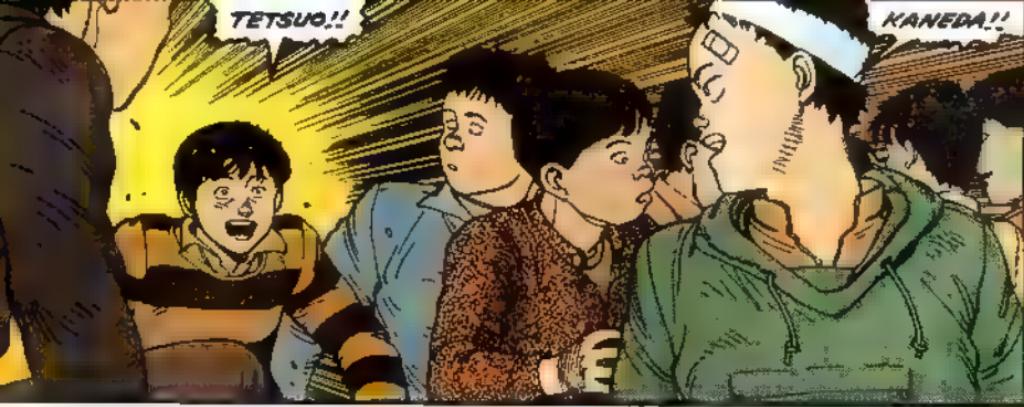


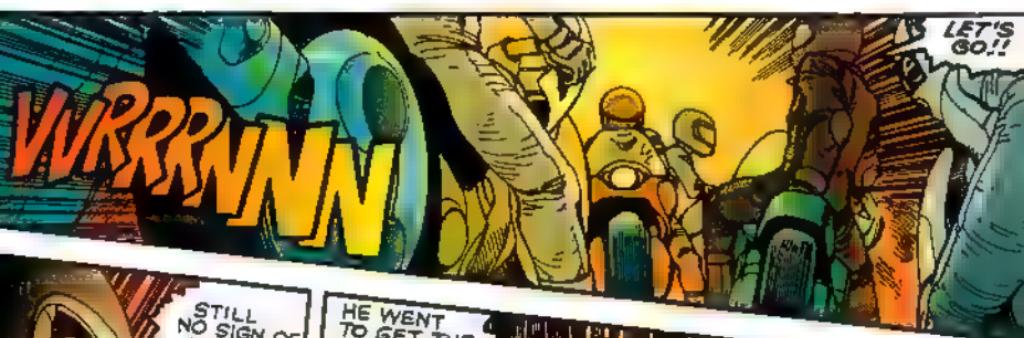






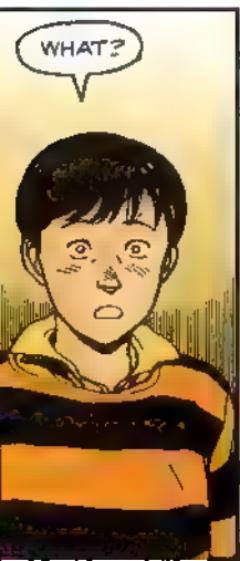
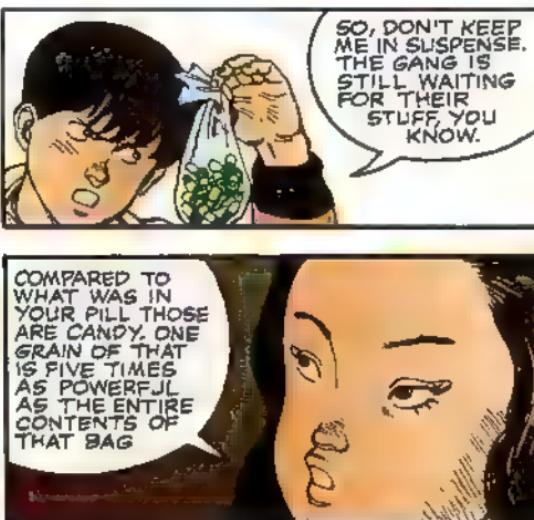






VURRRNNN

YOU AIN'T WRONG.



IT'S CONTROLLED  
UNDER  
REGULATION  
SIXTY-SEVEN.

WHICH  
MEANS  
...?

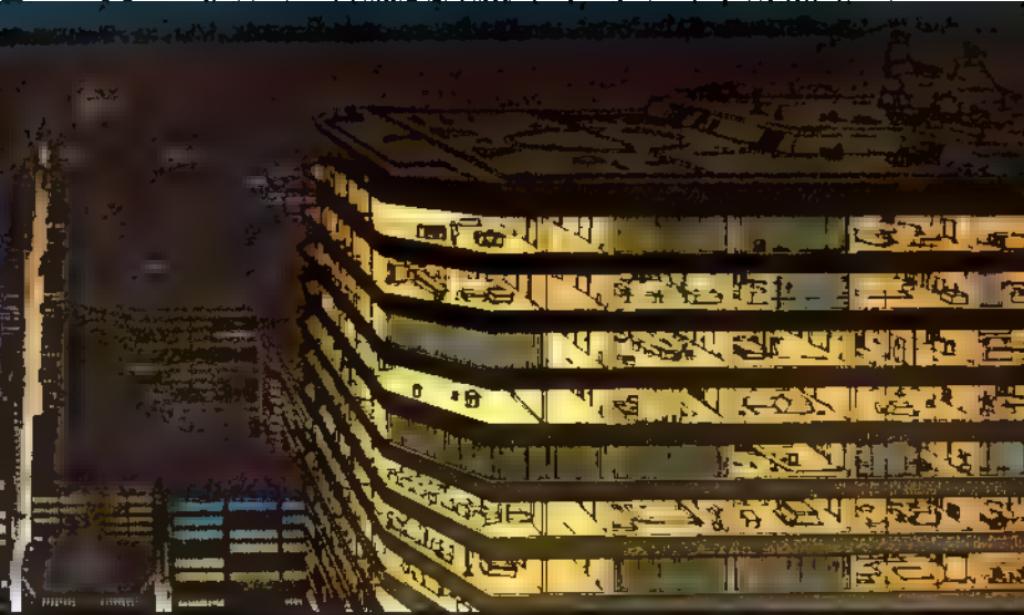
THE PUBLIC DOESN'T  
HAVE ACCESS TO IT.  
THERE'S NO LEGAL  
WAY A PRIVATE  
CITIZEN CAN GET  
THIS DRUG.

WHAT ABOUT THE  
GOVERNMENT?  
SOMETIMES IT'S  
SURPRISING WHO  
GETS INVOLVED  
IN--







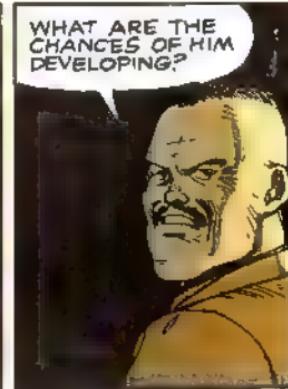
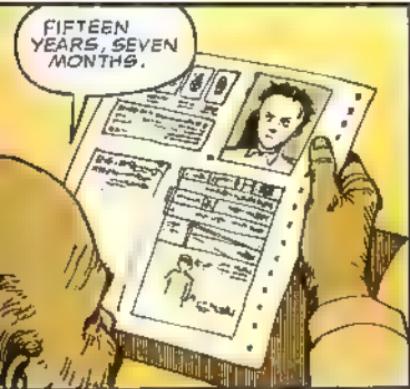


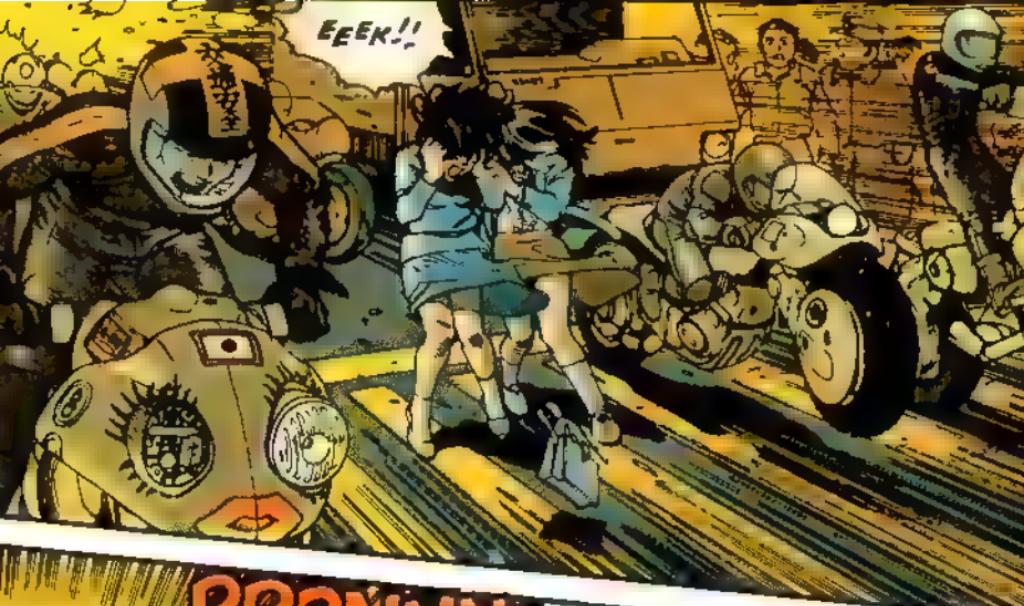
BECAUSE IT  
OCCURRED  
THERE, WE  
HAD HIM  
BROUGHT  
HERE.

SOMETHING  
TURNED UP IN  
THE ELECTRO-  
ENCEPHALO-  
GRAM.

WE CHECKED AND  
RECHECKED IT. THERE'S  
A PATTERN TO HIS  
BRAIN WAVES I'VE  
NEVER ENCOUNTERED  
BEFORE.

HOW  
OLD  
IS  
HE?









# KATSUHIRO OTOMO

**T**he creator of **Akira** was born in April of 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, an agricultural and fishing province some 400 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. He grew up there and attended Sanuma High School, which, for a rural school, seems particularly favored by the comic book muse. Another prominent comics artist, **Yoji Kamata**, is also a graduate, and, some years earlier, one of Japan's most famous comics creators, **Shotaro Ishinomori**, known world-wide for his **Cyborg 009**, **Kamen Rider**, and current best-seller, **Japan Inc.**

In high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." American films of the period in particular seemed to be capturing the new spirit of youthful unrest and rebellion all over the world. Movies such as **Bonnie and Clyde**, **Easy Rider**, **Five Easy Pieces**, and **The Strawberry Statement** had particular impact upon him at the time and some of their sensibility can still be detected in **Akira** and other work.

Soon after graduating high school in 1973, Otomo moved to Tokyo. His goal was to become a comics artist. He achieved this in August of 1973 when his first published work, an adaptation of the **Prosper Mérimée** short novel **Mateo Falcone**, appeared in the weekly comics magazine, **Action**.

Over the next few years, Otomo created a number of short stories in comics form. These would range from twenty to thirty pages, about the length of a full comic in the U.S. But in

Japan it is not unusual for an on-going comics story to run to a thousand pages or more. Customarily, stories first appear in serialized segments of twenty to thirty pages in a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly comics magazine and then, if popular, are collected into books of around 200 pages. During this period, Otomo's pieces were most regularly appearing in **Action** magazine. Later, they were collected into book form beginning with **Short Piece** in 1979. This collection was followed by **Highway Star** (October 1979), **Good Weather** (March 1981), and **Boogie Woogie Waltz** (May 1982).

Having achieved a promising degree of success and attention with these short works, Otomo began to apply his skills to longer material. In 1979, publication began on **Fire Ball**, a story built around a human versus mega-computer theme. Though it appeared in a limited circulation magazine and is, to date, still uncompleted, **Fire Ball** marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in the science-fiction action genre and established his following among high school and college students deeply addicted to the visual culture. **Fire Ball** was the natural forerunner of Otomo's two most acclaimed works, **Domu** and **Akira**.

**Domu** is a story centering upon the conflict between two residents of a modern day high rise apartment building. One is an old man, the other a little girl. Each possesses deadly psychic powers and their mounting duel has devastating consequences

for all around them. **Domu** began serialization in January of 1980 and continued for almost two years. When completed, it was revised by Otomo and issued in book form in August of 1983. **Domu** was an instant best seller as well as a subject of some controversy. It created a stir when it won Japan's science-fiction Grand Prix of 1983 for best s-f novel, the first time the prize had been awarded to a comics work.

The success of this 230 page graphic novel led Otomo to undertake an even more ambitious project which, when completed, would number some 1800 pages. As a place to launch this new work, he chose **Young Magazine** published by **Kodansha Ltd.** The bi-weekly magazine had been struggling to win the same high school-college student audience that Otomo perceived as the most aware and sensitive readership for the new directions he worked to achieve. The work was, of course, **Akira** and with its tradition-breaking appearance the circulation of **Young Magazine** began to rise. Today it is over one million. Each collected volume of **Akira** released in book form broke new ground in terms of format and price as well as in enthusiastic reader reaction. Four have appeared to date. The fifth and final volume is planned for Spring of 1989. When completed, the saga will have a total of three million copies in print.

Along with other comics work —such as **Sayonara Nippon** (Good-bye Japan), a tragic-comic story of a Japanese karate

expert's failed attempt to become a hero in New York, **Kibun-wa mo Senso** (Feel Like War), based upon an original script by **Toshihiko Yahagi** about a Japanese youth in China during World War III, and **Henzeru-to-Gureteru** (Hanzel and Gretel), a collection of parodies on **Grimm's Fairy Tales** and other classics—Otomo has remained interested and involved in film.

In 1982, he took about six months off to make his own sixteen millimeter film, **Jyu-O Warerani** (Give Me a Gun, Give Me Freedom). He produced it without any commercial backing, casting it with his own friends. When finished, it played at Kinokuniya Hall, a Tokyo theater for avant garde plays and films. Otomo has also continued to work in animated film as well as television commercials for such clients as Suntory, Canon, and Honda. Currently he has just completed the animated movie of **Akira** for which he acted as director, scenarist, designer and illustrator.

In Japan, there is a great deal of speculation about just where the title name of **Akira** originates (American readers have several issues to go before this character actually makes an appearance). There are those who assume it is homage to one of Otomo's favorite movie directors, **Akira Kurosawa**. Others have claimed it is the name of a drinking buddy of Otomo's from years ago. But Otomo himself never gives an answer. He just laughs. And the speculation, like interest in the series itself, continues to grow.

**KATSUHIRO OTOMO**

writer/illustrator

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chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

**MAKOTO SHIOSAKI**  
**SATOSHI TAKABATAKE**  
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**HIROSHI HIRATA**  
designer, AKIRA calligraph

**AKIRA SAITO**  
designer, Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd.

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with **LINDA M. YORK**  
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editor, Kodansha edition

**NORIYUKI OKAZAKI**  
**YUKA ANDO**  
editorial coordinators

Epic Comics

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english adaptation

**STEVE OLIFF**  
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**MICHAEL HIGGINS**  
letterer

**HECTOR COLLAZO**  
**ED MAGALDONG**  
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**MARK CHIARELLO**  
editorial assistant, Epic edition

**ARCHIE GOODWIN**  
editor, Epic edition

**A**s earth recovers from World War III, strange new events are shaping in Neo-Tokyo. A pursuit has begun. Its object is a wizened face child with incredible telekinetic powers and the mark Number 26 on his palm. He holds clues to something prized and feared. Something or someone called...AKIRA. Two pursuers are the mysterious girl, Kay, and her companion, Ryu. Opposing them are troops of a secret government force. Swept along is the rebellious young motorcycle gang leader, Kaneda. Attracted to Kay and angry with Number 26 for the injury of a friend, Kaneda becomes part of the violent cat-and-mouse game which leads into the city's sewer system and a showdown with two new players...The Colonel and Masaru, Number 27.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA



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